THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR): (a) and (b) Government have granted the authorisation to market transportation fuels in favour of M/s. Reliance Petroleum Limited (RPL) and M/s. Essar Oil Limited (EOL). These companies have proposed to set up 5849 and 1700 Retail Outlets respectively in various States.

(c) Government have asked the aforesaid companies to set up 10.9% of their total Retail Outlets in remote/low service areas to meet the requirement of such areas.

Import of surplus gas from Bangladesh

1462. SHRI B.J. PANDA:
SHRI R.P. GOENKA:
SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government of Bangladesh has accorded its approval for the proposed export of surplus natural gas to India;

(b) if so, the details of the agreement reached with Bangladesh;

(c) the arrangements finalised for laying the pipelines and time-frame fixed for actual flow of gas to India; and

(d) the areas to be covered for distribution of this gas?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR): (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (d) Do not arise. However, in case the Government of Bangladesh decides to export gas to India, a consortium of three Oil Public Sector Undertakings, namely Indian Oil Corporation Limited, Gas Authority of India Limited and Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Limited Will participate.

Anomaly in foreign postings

1463. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY:
SHRI K. M. KHAN:

Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention as been drawn to the news-item

appearing in Hindustan Times dated 21st June, 2002 under the caption, "IAS Lobby changing guidelines to get overseas Tourism Ministry jobs";

(b) if so, the details thereof and Government's reaction thereto; and

(c) the steps proposed to be taken to address the problems highlighted in the report which besides affecting adversely the career prospects of the departmental professions, are a defeating the very prospects of improving tourism which is suffering from one of the worst recessions in recent times?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRI JAGMOHAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) The Department of Tourism had framed reveised guidelines enhancing the zone of consideration. The new guidelines are more rigorous that earlier guidelines as the taking into cognizance of competitive nature of global tourism market and accordingly give weightage *inter alia* to managerial abilities, verbal and written communication skills, knowledge of Indian tourism product, knowledge of global tourism scenario knowledge of administration, financial skills and knowledge of computers. The rationale behind revised guidelines is to select the best and brightest officers for posting overseas tourist offices who can aggressively market the rich cultural, spiritual and natural tourism products of India.

It is not true that the career prospects of Departmental Tourism Officer are being affected adversely since foreign posting are not promotional postings but are selection postings.

Funds for Development of Tourism

1464. PROF. M.M. AGARWAL: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) what steps are being taken by Government to promote and develop tourism sector in the country;

(b) the details of funds allocated and actually granted to the various States for promotion and development of tourism infrastructure during the last two years and till date;

(c) whether the funds allocated for the States have been utilized during this period; and